

**Minutes of a meeting of Sunninghill & Ascot Parish Council
Held in the King Edward VII Meeting Room, Ascot Racecourse, SL5 7JX
On Tuesday 07 May 2024 at 7.00pm**

Members present: A Sharpe (Chairman), B Hilton (Vice Chairman), P Carter, L Davison West, J Gripton, C Herring, C Revilla, C Richardson, D Sanders, M Turton, S Verma and R Wood.

In attendance: Helen Goodwin, Clerk to the Parish Council;
Members of the public: Mr Peter Harris, Mrs Jane Richardson, Mr Robert Ellison.

8750 PUBLIC ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes to allow the members of the public present to address the council.

Mr Peter Harris spoke about the project to save the Novello Theatre. He gave a brief history of the building, how it has been used and how it has been allowed to deteriorate to its current condition, although it is still structurally sound. He explained that RBWM has now attributed a value to it of £300,000 which, although considered by those running the project to be too high, still represents a historic opportunity.

Mrs Jane Richardson, chair of the Cordes Hall management committee, spoke about this as an opportunity to 'create a fantastic arts and community hub'. She outlined the team's experience in running this type of project and explained how the Cordes Hall is so well used it is currently unable to meet all the demands of local groups and is having to turn people away. Having the Novello theatre, which is set up for live performances with all the necessary changing rooms and other space, would enable more local groups to have a space to meet and perform, providing a more varied programme and increased activity which would have a positive effect on local businesses and schools.

Jane also stressed that having an expanded arts centre in Sunninghill wouldn't affect, or be affected by, the proposed new community building in Ascot, as current users of the Cordes Hall come from both Sunninghill and surrounding areas and equally use other venues elsewhere, which they will continue to do. The team strongly believes that the proposals for Ascot would in no way be in conflict with this project.

It was pointed out how well supported the project has been shown to be in the community, with 1600+ people signing a petition in under two weeks, and the two meetings held to discuss it attracted so many people there was standing room only in the Cordes Hall.

Peter explained that the parish council should feel confident that a detailed business plan has been drawn up which is robust and, by working with the Cordes Hall which has a high standard of governance, the facilities will be able to be successfully combined. They have built a comprehensive forecast of what they can expect to generate from having the combined buildings with a minimum projected income of £57,000 per year and outgoings of £48,000, allowing them to invest in the buildings. He went on to say that they have already had a private donation of £100,000 and are confident they can raise the capital for the project with the support of the parish council. They therefore intend to apply for CIL funding to help them move at the pace they need to provide the facility. They believe this is both urgent and important – it is a once in a lifetime opportunity which, if not taken, could result in the building being demolished to make way for a development of flats.

Councillors asked:

- Is it your intention that the Novello would be the principal performance space, allowing Cordes Hall to become the extra facility for other groups/societies?
Peter explained that both the Cordes Hall and the Novello would be performance spaces; the Novello is better set up for theatre performances, with changing rooms, etc, but the Cordes Hall works well for a variety of different performers such as dance bands, comedy night, etc. The two will sit together and work in conjunction.
- Is it correct that you will need to pay RBWM £300,000 but are looking for another £300,000 on top of that to restore the building?
Peter responded that yes, that is so, though RBWM has signalled they will be flexible on timing.

8751 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr A Sharpe was nominated by Cllr J Gripton, seconded by Cllr P Carter and was appointed Chairman of the council as agreed unanimously by show of hands. Cllr Sharpe duly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

8752 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Cllr B Hilton was nominated by Cllr C Herring, seconded by Cllr S Verma, and was appointed Vice-Chairman of the council as agreed unanimously by show of hands. Cllr Hilton duly signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

8753 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs D Hilton, B Story and R Tavoletti, and accepted by the members.

8754 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The chairman asked to receive any Declarations of Interest in accordance with the adopted Code of Conduct. None were declared.

8755 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The chairman asked the councillors present to state on which committees they wished to serve. Councillors responded as follows:

- Planning Committee: Cllrs P Carter, C Herring, B Hilton, D Hilton, A Sharpe, M Turton, S Verma and R Wood.
- Leisure & Cultural Committee: Cllrs L Davison West, J Gripton, B Hilton, C Revilla, C Richardson, D Sanders and A Sharpe.
- CIL Committee: Cllrs L Davison West, J Gripton, B Hilton, D Hilton, C Richardson, D Sanders, A Sharpe, M Turton, S Verma, R Wood.
- The F&P Committee comprises the chairmen and vice-chairman of full council and formal committees.

8756 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN & VICE-CHAIRMEN

Appointments made were:

- Planning Committee:
 - Chairman - Cllr R Wood, nominated by Cllr C Herring, seconded by Cllr P Carter.
 - Vice-Chairman – Cllr D Hilton, nominated by Cllr P Carter, seconded by Cllr S Verma.

- Leisure & Cultural Committee:

- Chairman:
 - Cllr C Richardson was nominated by Cllr L Davison West seconded by Cllr A Sharpe.
 - Cllr J Gripton, was nominated by Cllr C Revilla, seconded by Cllr D Sanders.

Both nominees were invited to address the council separately to set out their reason for standing for committee chairman, following which votes were taken by show of hands. Cllr Richardson was duly elected chairman by 8 votes to 2.

- Vice-Chairman – Cllr L Davison West, nominated by Cllr M Turton, seconded by Cllr A Sharpe.

- CIL Committee – no nominations were taken for Chairman or Vice-Chairman as this item is to be deferred to the next meeting.
- Lead Member for Finance – Cllr R Wood, nominated by Cllr B Hilton, seconded by Cllr P Carter. All appointments were agreed unanimously by show of hands.

8757 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Representatives were appointed to outside bodies as follows:

- Cordes Hall Management Committee – Cllr B Story had indicated she wished to continue to stand. Cllr L Davison West also wished to put her name forward and it was agreed that the clerk would contact the Cordes Hall management committee to ask if the parish council might have two representatives, as was the case historically.
- RBWM Rural Forum – Cllr B Story had indicated that she was willing to continue to stand. Cllr C Herring indicated that she was willing to stand. The clerk will contact the Forum to ask if the parish can send two representatives.
- Parish Conference – Chair & Clerk.
- Ascot Rejuvenation Stakeholder Group – Chairman & Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee.
- Neighbourhood Action Group – Cllrs L Davison West and D Hilton, the clerk.
- It was noted that the Parish Council appoints two trustees to the Sunninghill Trust on four-year terms. They are currently Wayne Phelan (until April 2027) and Will Dalton (until January 2025).

8758 DEEDS & TRUST DOCUMENTS

The Deeds and Trust documents in the custody of the council were produced for councillors to inspect.

8759 APPROVAL OF PROCEDURAL DOCUMENTS FOR THE YEAR 2024/25, THE INTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS AND THE INSURANCE QUOTE FOR THE YEAR 2024/25

The procedural documents which had been provided to the council as backing papers ahead of the meeting for approval were:

- Standing Orders 2024;
- Financial Regulations 2024;
- Risk Review 2024;
- Complaints Procedure 2024.

All were agreed unanimously by show of hands.

The Internal Audit Arrangements and Insurance Arrangements, as advised by the Clerk in a backing paper ahead of the meeting, were agreed unanimously by show of hands.

8760 FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- South Ascot lease – a further extension to the lease, to 24 June, has been agreed and the clerk has emailed the Sunninghill Trust on two occasions to try to move things along.
- There will be two forthcoming training sessions/workshops, on 11 June and 01 July. The clerk will send round details when a venue has been confirmed.
- We recently had a travellers' encampment on the car park at Victory Field. The police and borough wardens were unable to take action to move them on; the chairman and clerk, having informed the F&P committee, made the decision to engage a firm of bailiffs who served notice on the travellers and ensured they moved on as soon as possible.
- There is no news yet on the Town or Village Green application for the land off Coombe Lane.
- Ascot Rejuvenation – Cala Homes are engaging with the council regarding the proposed developed on the south side of the High Street and they will be attending the planning meeting on 22 May to talk about their plans. On 23 May they will be holding a public consultation at Ascot Utd football club.
- The council wished to extend condolences to Jayne Strand and her family on the loss of her mother.
- The chairman and clerk recently met with Alastair Warwick, CEO of Ascot Racecourse. Subjects discussed were: the EV chargers which are in the process of being installed in car park 3; the development by London Square, who have not been consulting with the racecourse; work done by the racecourse locally including hedging and fencing, ahead of the development of car park 6; bus services and the provision of public transport for race meetings.

- The clerk has received a Freedom of Information request regarding the costs to the Parish Council of the Public Inquiry on the Town & Village Green (TVG) application for the land off Coombe Lane.

8761 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 March were approved as a correct record and signed as such.

8762 PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 16 April were presented by Cllr R Wood. He highlighted the applications that have been submitted for 5 Llanvair Drive.

8763 FINANCIAL UPDATES AND APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS LISTS

Cllr R Wood gave a brief overview of the year end accounts. He highlighted the costs associated with the TVP application, but the accounts have yet to be studied in more detail and, when they have been, he will report further.

Cllr Wood spoke about the CIL committee; they are expecting a request from the Novello theatre and the Victory Field project will be coming forward soon. At end March there are £1,850,000 CIL funds available.

The clerk presented the lists of payments for November 2023 to March 2024 for approval by the council and these were duly signed.

8764 COMMUNITY CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN

The business plan which had been provided by the Plunkett Foundation for the parish council to inform the space required for the community centre as part of Ascot Green West was presented to the council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Cllr A Sharpe, Chairman